

SOME
REFLECTIONS
ON
PRESCIENCE:

In which the
NATURE of the DIVINITY
is enquired into.

*Principio Cælum, ac Terras, Camposque liquentes,
Lucentemque Globum Luna, Titanique Astra
Spiritus intus sit, totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat Molem, & magno se corpore miscet.
Inde Hominum, Pecudumque Genus, vitæque volantum,
Et qua marmoreo fert Monstra sub Æquore Pontus;
Igneus est ollis vigor, & Cœlestis Origo
Seminibus, quantum non noxia corpora tardant,
Terrenisque hebetant artus, moribundaque membra.
Hinc metuunt, cupiuntque: dolent, gaudentque: neque auras
Despiciunt, clausa tenebris & carcere coeco.*

VIRGIL.

L O N D O N :

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ERRATA.

The Reader is desired to correct the following Faults.

- Page 3. Line 22. Instead of *plainly and necessarily imply*, read *seem plainly and necessarily to imply*.
- Page 4. Line 2. for *Nature* read *Natures*.
- Page 29. Line 7. for *conceiv'd* read *contriv'd*.
- Page 35. Line 7. instead of a Semicolon after *if true*, those Words should be in a Parenthesis, (*if true*)
- Page 39. Line 10. for *Nature* read *Natures*.
- Page 40. Line 19. after the Word *foreknowable* add in *their own Natures by God from all Eternity; and if not foreknowable in that manner, it is, &c.*



P R E F A C E.



N ingenuous Lover of Truth, One that searches into the nature of things, in order to form in his own Mind consistent Notions, and just Sentiments, and that publishes what he thinks right, with a view of Benefit to others, or of having his own Opinions canvass'd, and the Truth, or Falsehood of them shewn, is in a great degree intitled to publick Indulgence.

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THE Generality of Writers pay not that Regard to Truth which they ought. They think themselves obliged to prove the Subject they have taken in hand, and are less anxious to convince themselves than their Readers. Hence it is that we see so much Sophistry and Captiousness in most modern Performances. An Author of this Stamp has little Pretension to be well receiv'd by the Publick: His Desire to please does not arise from any Benefit he is willing to procure them, but from a Vanity of being thought very wise and knowing. But there is another Species of Writers, that has still less right to publick Favour; and who ought by no means to meet with Encouragement.

ment. I mean those, whose Writings tend to expose and ridicule the establish'd Religion of a Country.

LET it, for once, be allowed these Writers, that the publick Religion is false; yet, as it is absolutely necessary, that there should be some publick religious Establishment as a Fence against the wild Imaginations of the ignorant Many, who must be led, because their daily Occupations and Employments will not allow them Time to be Leaders, and to study Religion and Virtue as a Science: It is a most unjustifiable thing to endeavour to convince them, that that Religion by which they are taught and commanded to be virtuous; and

which is a Tye upon them, is false, and an Imposition on their Understandings. It may perhaps be alledged, to excuse the Publication of such Books, that the Multitude do not read them; and that, even if they did, they would not understand them, it requiring more Learning than they are supposed to have. Be it so, grant even that not one of the illiterate Many, (which perhaps though may not be the Case,) has ever been dissuaded from a Belief of his Religion, by any Books wrote against it; is the View of these Writers one whit the less blameable, because they have miss'd their Aim? I would not be thought here to mean, that Men of Sense and Understanding should be deny'd the Privilege of speaking their

their Minds, even against a public religious Establishment; provided they do it with Decency, Sobriety, and good Manners: such a Restraint upon Men would be attended with as fatal Consequences as too much Liberty, and be an Inlet to Superstition, Priest-Craft, and Error; as this is but too visibly the Case in Roman-Catholick Countries: but to turn a Religion into Ridicule, that helps to keep Numbers honest and virtuous, is an Action unbecoming a Gentleman and Man of Honour

IN speculative Knowledge the Case is not the same. A Man may differ from received Notions in Speculation, without any ill Consequence to the State. Speculative Truths,

Truths, *that are discoverable by Reason, are the rightful Possession of every Man, that has the Use of Reason, and thinks them worth acquiring. Accordingly ancient and modern Philosophers have given their Opinions in speculative Points with great Freedom, and thought they had a Right to do so.*

OF all the Thoughts that croud the Mind of one, who is naturally turn'd for Contemplation, none give greater Delight than the Consideration of the divine Nature. Various have been the Opinions of Men in this Point. Some have made the Deity quite spiritual, and Creator of Matter. Others, on the contrary, render him quite material, and make Intelligence (which they

they are forced to allow in the Universe,) to be nothing but a particular Modification of Matter. There are Difficulties in both these Systems, which seem to be unanswerable. The Reader will find them in the following Reflections. It were to be wished, that the Favourers of these Systems would study to answer the Objections that might be made to each of them, instead of being silent on Points of such Consequence, on which the Truth of their Systems depend; or else fairly own they cannot. This indeed, would be of general Use, and cut Speculation very short, by reducing it to plain Truth.

*THE Author of the following
Reflections has endeavour'd to come
at*

at some certain Knowledge of the divine and human Mind. As he thinks there is some Affinity between them, that is, as he thinks that that Intelligence, of which Man is participant, is of the same Nature as that which is so visible in the Universe; he cannot but think it possible for Man to form some consistent Idea of the Divinity, enough, at least, to satisfy his own Mind. The Reader, therefore, is desired, whatsoever Opinion he may have of the Author's Sentiments, not to condemn his Search after Truth, nor to look upon his Reflections as the positive Dogma of one that thinks he has attain'd.





REFLECTIONS

UPON

PRESCIENCE.



Y Prescience is generally understood God's foreknowing not only every action of every Man, but likewise every, the most minute thing, that happens in the Universe. Now this Definition of God's Prescience seems to me to be absurd, and no-wise capable of Demonstration, as I shall endeavour to shew in the following Sheets. But first beg leave to observe before-hand,

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That

That in the present Inquiry I shall examine no further than is absolutely necessary, Whether

GOD is *Spirit*, or
Matter, or
 Both, or
 Neither, or

Whether the *World* is *eternal*, or not ;
 but shall consider *Prescience*, as a *Part*
 of *God's Character*, which must be consistent with the Whole of it, and not destructive of *human Liberty*.

THIS premised, I proceed and say, that *God's Foreknowledge*, as defined above, is a Notion not to be maintain'd, as being incapable of Demonstration.

BECAUSE, unless every *action* that passes in the Universe be *foreknowable* in its own *nature* from all *Eternity*, It is not necessary that *God* should *foreknow* it ; that is, in other Words, that *God* may be infinitely *perfect* without *foreknowing* it, and consequently that there is no
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absolute necessity that *God* should *fore-know* it. Now the particular *Actions*, that *pass* in the *Universe* are not *fore-knowable* from all *Eternity* in their own *natures*, because the *Actors* of them, and things acted upon, are not *eternal* themselves.

TO explain this; What I may do, during the Time, that I shall exist in this World, cannot be *foreknowable* from all *Eternity*, unless it be likewise *foreknown* from all *Eternity*, that I shall be *born* at such a *time*, and the *Foreknowledge* of my birth, necessarily includes *that* of my *Father*, and *Mother*, and of his and her *Ancestors*, which will bring us back to the *first* of our *Species*. I say *first*, because the Nature of Man's coming into the World, and the Continuation of our Species (I speak of that Part of the *Human Creature*, which is sensible to *View*) plainly, and necessarily imply a *Beginning*. Now the *Actions* of a *Creature*, that has had a *Beginning* in *time*, not being *foreknowable* from all

Eternity in their own *Natures* (and if not *foreknowable* in their own *Nature* from all *Eternity*, then not absolutely necessary to be *foreknown* by *God*,) it is no part of *God's* Character to *foreknow* them.

BUT if it should be objected, that *God foreknew* from all *Eternity*, that after such a Space of Time *Man* would *exist*, and that that *Foreknowledge* includes the *Foreknowledge* of all the *actions* of that *Creature* ;

I answer, that it does not follow from thence that the *actions* of *men* are *foreknowable* by *God*, unless they are *so* in their own *Natures* from all *Eternity* : Because the *Existence* of *Man*, according to the present Supposition, being in *God's* own *Breast*, and *God's* own *action*, is *foreknowable* by him from all *Eternity* in the *nature* of the thing itself ; whereas the *actions* of *Men* not being *foreknowable* in their own *Natures*, by *God*, from all *Eternity*, are not included necessarily in

in God's Foreknowledge of Man's Existence.

IF it should be farther urged, that that *part* of the *Human Creature*, which some call *Intelligence, Mind, Soul*, is *eternal* by its *Nature*, and consequently that the *actions* of such a *Creature* are *foreknowable* from all *Eternity* by God in their own *Natures*;

I answer, That this Objection contains three very material *Points*, which must be cleared up before the Objection can be founded.

THE First, That Man's *Soul* is *eternal* by its *Nature*, which not being a *self-evident Truth*, requires Demonstration, some Men being of Opinion that the *Soul* is *created* by God *mortal* in its *Nature*, and only made *immortal* thro' his *Goodness*; and others that the *Soul* is *mortal*, and *dies* with the *Body*.

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THE Second, That the *Soul* and *Body* are two *distinct Essences*, only united together from a certain Point of Time, which (as we see nothing in the *Universe*, endued with *Intelligence*, but what likewise has *Body*, that is, as in the *Universe* we see no *purely-intelligent Being*) is a Point disputable by those, who deny *Revelation*.

THE Third, That the *Soul* is not *mortal*.

IT is necessary therefore to determine which of these three *Propositions* is the *true* one, or if either of them is *true*, before I can proceed to consider the *Objection*.

AS to the first; if Man's *Soul* is *eternal* by its *Nature*, that is, if that *Parcel of Intelligence* which I find in me, is not *owing* to my *Body*, but *existed* before that, and was not *created* by *God* either *before*, or at the *time* of my *Birth*,

Birth, but was from all *Eternity*, which must be the Case, if it be *eternal* by its *Nature*, then this *particular Parcel* of *Intelligence* must either be a *Part* of that *general Intelligence* which runs thro' the *whole of Things*, that is, must be a *Part* of *Deity*, or else *Self-existing separatim*. As to its being *Self-existing separatim*, that is absurd; and as to the other Supposition, *viz.* that the *Soul*, if *eternal* by its *Nature*, must be a *Part* of *Deity*: It is certain, that as it is no greater Absurdity to say, that, tho' Millions be *born* into the *World* there is no greater Quantity of *Intelligence* than there was before, nor would there, if Millions should die, be any diminution of *Intelligence*, than it is to say that *Matter* is neither *augmented*, nor *diminished* by those that are *born* into, and those that *die* out of the *World*, so that *Intelligence* which is in the *Universe* must necessarily comprehend those *particular Parcels* of *Intelligence*, which are *distributed* among those *Creatures*, that are *participant* of *Reason*: and if
so,

so, the *Soul of Man*, upon a Supposition of its being *eternal* by its *Nature*, must be, as above, a *Part of Deity*.

AS to the Second and Third Points, If the *Soul* and *Body* are *distinct Essences*, and only *united* from a certain *Point of Time*, and that the *Soul* is not *mortal*; then, as before, the *Soul* being *eternal*, must be a *Part of the Deity*. But of this more will be said hereafter. The Question now to be settled, is, *Is the Soul eternal, or no?* And

THIS leads necessarily into a Consideration of the *Deity*. But this is a Subject of so nice a *Discussion*, and it is so difficult (not to say impossible) to come at a *mathematical Demonstration* what the *Deity* is, that Both *Antients* and *Moderns* have found themselves lost in the *Search*. We have no sensible *Notion* of any thing besides *Matter*. Nevertheless, we see as visible Effects of *Mind*, or *Intelligence*, as of *Matter*, in the *Universe*. The *reasoning Faculty*,
which

which I find in me, and which directs my Actions, is as real a thing as that *Body* which is *guided* by it. Either then *Intelligence* was *eternally* join'd with *Matter*, or only *in time* ; or else *Matter* was *created* by that *Principle* of *Intelligence* necessarily *existing* from all *Eternity*, or *vice versâ*, *Intelligence* was *created* by *Matter* necessarily *existing* from all *Eternity*.

ETERNAL Matter un-intelligent, creating Intelligence, is absurd ; the very Action of *creating* implying *Intelligence*, which is a *Faculty*, *Matter* is here suppos'd to *want* : consequently, *Matter* could not *create Intelligence*. And as to pure *Intelligence* existing from all *Eternity*, and *creating Matter*, that is little better. Besides, the very Notion of an *eternal Being purely intelligent, existing from all Eternity*, in an *immense Vacuum*, that is, in an *immense Void of Matter*, which would be the Case here, implies a Contradiction in Terms : for it is no other than supposing an *eternal Something*

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thing to exist in an immense Nothing,
(infinite Space being, in this Case, only
suppositious, and no more real than the
infinite Progression of a Geometrical Line)
 unless this *immense Void of Matter* in
 which the *Deity* is here supposed to ex-
 ist, is suppos'd to be *spiritual*. This in-
 deed clears up the Contradiction there
 would otherwise be, but then it supposes
infinite Space to be God; which has in-
 deed been asserted by some: But, if *infi-*
nite Space is God, that is, if this *eternal*
Intelligence is immense Spirituality; we
 shall be as much at a loss to account for
 the *Existence of Matter*. Turn and twist
Spirit into Millions of different *Modifi-*
cations, give *Spirit unlimited Faculties*,
 give it *Omnipotence*, give it *infinite Wis-*
dom, infinite Goodness, it can never be
 conceiv'd, much less demonstrated, that
 it could ever create *a Nature different*
from itself, that is, *a Nature that has*
different Powers, Properties and Facul-
ties than itself has. This *eternal intel-*
ligent Principle, this *immense Spirituality*
 then could no more create *Matter*, than
 Matter

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Matter could create *it* ; and as to their being joined in time, supposing them to be *distinct Essences*, and not *created* by one another, that is yet more absurd : for it is impossible to suppose *eternal Intelligence*, (which in the very Idea of the Word implies *Life*,) and *eternal Matter dead and stupid*, (for *Matter* without *Life* and *Intelligence* is *dead and stupid*,) existing both *necessarily* and *independently* of each other. But, besides the Absurdity of such a Supposition, if that had been the Case, *Intelligence* and *Matter* would ever have continued *so* ; for *Matter*, (be it ever so *passive*,) could never have been forced to receive *Life* and *Intelligence*, it being suppos'd to *exist* in *Independance*. *Consent* it could not, for that is supposing *Matter* to have both *Life* and *Intelligence* before it receiv'd either *Life* or *Intelligence*. *Matter* having now both one and the other, we must be forced to allow they were *eternally joined* ; which is indeed an improper way of speaking, and a great Error : for, if they were *eternally joined*, they were *never asunder* ; and if

never asunder, Life, Intelligence, and Matter, cannot be called three different Existencies, but one. And though Life, Intelligence, and Matter, form three distinct Ideas in our Minds, and we can think of them, as if they were three distinct things; yet if, in examining, we find, that neither one nor the other could exist separately from all Eternity, nor create each other, (as I presume has been above demonstrated,) and that all three are in the Universe, I see no reason why it may not be concluded, that Life, Intelligence and Matter, are in Fact one and the same thing, self-existent, eternal, and consequently God.

IF it be objected that, if *Matter, Life and Intelligence*, were but *one and the same thing*, every individual part of *Matter* would then equally *think and live* :

I answer, It may as well be deny'd, that I *think and live*, or that I am *one*, because every individual part of me does not *think*, and *live separatim*, of itself.

I know numberless Objections may be formed against this Notion of the *Deity*; but I think, they may be reduced to these.

1st, THAT *Deity* being *uncompounded* and *simple*, is here supposed to be *compos'd of Parts*.

I answer to this, That these supposed *Parts* of the *Deity* exist only in our *I-deas*, and not in *Deity* itself; *Life, Intelligence* and *Matter*, being *eternally united*, are, as is above-mention'd, no real *Parts* of each other, *never having been asunder*.

2^{dly}, THAT allowing this Notion to hold good in *general*, and that *Life, Intelligence* and *Matter*, may be demonstrated to be *one and the same thing*; yet, when we come to *Particulars*, the Notion destroys itself, since *Matter* being *divisible ad infinitum*, *God* becomes likewise *divisible*, which is absurd; *God* being

being here suppos'd to be *simple* and *uncompounded*; *Life*, *Intelligence* and *Matter*, being but *one* and *the same thing*.

I answer, That if by *God's* being *simple* and *uncompounded*, is meant that he is *indivisible*; *Matter* cannot pretend to such Privilege, *Matter* being *infinitely divisible*. But I think, this Notion of *God's Simplicity* or *Uncompoundedness* ill-explain'd by *Indivisibility*; for that, supposing him *all Spirit*, He is *equally*, and as *really divisible* as if He was *all Matter*; because each *Attribute* of the *Divinity* (which *Attribute* may still be *subdivided*, and this *Subdivision* again *parted*, and so on *ad infinitum*) is as real a *Part* of *God's Essence*, as my *Arm* is of my *Body*. It cannot indeed be *cut off* from *God's Essence*, as my *Arm* can from my *Body*, for this reason, that *Spirit* not being *palpable Substance*, (the only *Idea* we can have of the *Essence* of *Spirit*, being the reverse of that of *Matter*,) cannot admit of any *solid separating* of its *Essence*, such as of *Matter*, but only such as is

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consonant to its *Nature*; and this must be allowed (the two Essences of *Spirit* and *Matter* duly consider'd,) to be as *real* as the *Separation* of the *Parts* of *Matter*. Wherefore, if by *God's Uncompoundedness*, is understood *Indivisibility*, *God* can as little be *Spirit* as *Matter*, *Spirit* being as capable of *Divisibility*, according to its *Nature*, as *Matter*. Now, this is absurd, Deity must be *one* or the *other*. I think, therefore, this Explanation of *God's Simplicity*, or *Uncompoundedness*, carries with it a very confus'd *Idea*, and is no ways *satisfactory*; and that, instead of being explained by *Indivisibility*, it means nothing but *his Sameness of Nature*, inadmissible of any nature different from itself, which is no less true of *Matter* than of *Spirit*; for *Matter*, though differently *modify'd* and *shaped*, is still *Matter*. And thus *Matter*, tho' *divisible* into *infinite parts*, is no more contradictory to, or inconsistent with the above Notion of the *Divinity*, than *Spirit*, which has been proved, *cæteris paribus*, to be as *divisible* as *Matter*.

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THAT as to the *real palpable Divisibility* of *Matter*, which, according to this Objection, renders the *Divinity divisible ad infinitum*, I shall only answer, That *Matter* having been demonstrated above to be *eternally united with Life and Intelligence*; that is, *Life, Intelligence and Matter*, having been demonstrated to be *one*; or in other Words, having been demonstrated to be *God*: if this Demonstration is true, the *Divisibility* of *Matter* can be no Objection to it; for then such *Divisibility* will be suitable to his *Nature*, as well as *all the other Properties of Matter*. And this Demonstration must be true, unless *God* can be prov'd to be *something distinct* from *Life, Intelligence and Matter*; which I think impossible. I say, *Life, Intelligence and Matter*, because I cannot *separate* them in the *Origin of things*.

BUT if it should be urged here, that this Explanation of *God's Simplicity* or *Uncompoundedness* is *unfair*, because there is

is nothing in the Universe but *Life, Intelligence* and *Matter* ; and consequently, that God's *Inadmissibility of any Nature different from himself*, cannot be contradicted.

I answer, That it is certain *God* is *All in All* ; and that there is but *one Nature* in the *Universe*, since *two contrary Natures* could never *exist* together from all *Eternity* ; that, as to the particular Parts of the Universe, and the *seemingly jarring Natures* which we see in *things*, these are all *reconcilable* and *consonant* in the *Origin of Nature* ; and being only the *different Modifications of Matter and Spirit*, are only *contradictory to each other*, as *such Modifications differ one from another*. And hence *natural*, as well as *moral Evil*, may easily be accounted for, and will be found to be neither *original*, nor *primary* in *Nature*, and no otherwise *real*, (which is not *real* at all,) than as *one Modification of Matter is disagreeable to another*. Thus a sharp Steel will pierce my Body, and that will be *evil* to

D me.

me. But is it *evil*, in the *nature of things*, that a *sharp* Body should pierce a *blunt* one? Is there any *primary*, or *original Evil* in this? And with respect to *moral Evil*, I see a beautiful Woman, and gain her Consent to lie with her; this is *Evil* to her *Husband, Father, Brother*. But is it *Evil*, in the *nature of things*, that my *Eyes* should take in a beautiful Object, and my *Senses* covet the *Enjoyment of Beauty*? Is there any *original*, or *primary Evil* in this? What then is *Evil*, *natural* and *moral*? Nothing but the *Disagreeableness* of *hard* and *soft*, *sharp* and *blunt*, *hot* and *cold*, &c. in *natural things*; and in *moral ones*, the *Disagreeableness* of one *Man's Action* with respect to *another*, occasion'd by the *Passions* of the *human Creature*: and what is the *Evil* of all this? No other than that *one Modification of Matter and Spirit* differs from *another*, and is *disagreeable* to it; no *real*, no *primary*, no *original Evil* in *Nature*. But, to return from this short Digression to the *Objection* against my *Explanation* of *God's*
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Uncompoundedness, I reply, that I cannot think my Explanation *unfair* in that, there is but *one original Nature*, no more than I can think the Proof of *God's Existence unfair*, viz. *that God exists necessarily*, because it cannot be contradicted.

3dly, THAT supposing the above Notion of the *Divinity* to be true, *God necessarily suffers when Man suffers, God is unjust when Man is unjust, &c.* things *inconsistent* with the *divine Nature*.

THIS is the next Objection of weight that I can think of, and is indeed the more difficult to be answer'd, in that our *Ideas* are not *adequate* to the present Object of them, the *Divinity*. However, I believe it may be sufficiently demonstrated, that the *Particulars* comprised in this Objection are, not at all *chargeable* on *God*, nor *inconsistent* with the *divine Nature*; they being nothing else, as I said before, but the *different Modifications* of *Matter* and *Spirit*; nothing *bad* *originally* and *primarily*, and *no other-*
D 2 *wise*

wise than as they are *unsuitable to each other*. But to come to the Point.

IT is implied in the Objection, that *God cannot be the Whole of what is*, because then, *God would suffer, God would be unjust; when Man suffers, or is unjust, &c. Things inconsistent with the Divine Nature.*

I answer, that it has been demonstrated (as much as Human Reason can demonstrate any thing to which it has not *adequate Ideas*) that *Life, Intelligence and Matter* cannot be supposed ever to have been *asunder*; (the *Poetical Chaos* being a very pretty, but very *unphilosophical* Notion,) and that therefore *God cannot be*

Life separately, nor

Intelligence separately, nor

Matter separately, nor

Something distinct from all this; there being nothing in the Universe, but what is composed of *one or more* of these three *Essences*. Now, if this Notion
of

of the *Divinity* be as much proved in *general*, as a thing of this Nature can be proved, that is, if there can be no Objection made to the Foundation of the *Proof*; I see no Reason why the *Proof* should not be admitted. Or in other Words, if it is demonstrable, that *Life, Intelligence and Matter* have been *from all Eternity united*, that is, *are One*, I do not see how that Proof is invalidated; because, I can't tell *why*, nor *how*, *Deity* has thought fit to *modify Matter and Spirit*, nor in *what manner* these *particular Modifications* are *connected* with *him*.

AS to the *Injustices and Sufferings* of *Man, &c.* which Things are the natural result of such *Modifications* of *Matter and Spirit*, as compose the *Human Species*: I see no reason there is to say, that *therefore God suffers, God is unjust. God can never suffer; God can never be unjust.* It has already been demonstrated, that there is no such thing, as *original or primary Ill*; the *seeming Ill*,

Ill, which we see in the *moral* and *natural* Parts of the Universe, being nothing but the difference of their *particular Modifications*, *unsuited* and *disagreeing* with *each other*. In like manner, there is no *original*, nor *primary Injustice* or *Suffering* in *God*; because *Man suffers*, or is *unjust*, &c. *Man's Sufferings* and *Injustice*, &c. being the *Consequence* of his *particular Modification*, the *Nature* of which subjecting him to *particular Desires*, his being *deprived* of *them* naturally makes him *suffer*, and often renders him *unjust* to obtain *them*. Now this *particular Modification of Matter and Spirit*, (*Man*) and his *Nature*, being *so* formed by the *Author of all things*, and subjected to such and such *Laws*; nothing that happens within the *compass* of his *Nature*, (and nothing can happen *out of it*) can be *recriminated* on *God*, without destroying necessarily one of his chief *Attributes*, *viz. his Wisdom*; because *God*, or the *Author of Nature*, cannot be supposed to have *subjected himself* (accord-

(according to the present Objection) to *suffer* or be *unjust*, &c. things *contrary* to his own *Nature*. But all this difficulty arises from our imagining *ourselves* to be so many *real Parts of the Divinity*, (according to the present Definition of the *Deity*;) whereas, the meaning of *God's being the Whole of what is*, is only, that there is *no Nature* in the *Universe* different from *that of God*; that is existing *distinctim, aut separatim*. But supposing *God* to be *entirely spiritual*, we shall be as much puzzled to exclude *God* from *Suffering* and being *Unjust*, *Man* being in this Case, no less a *Part* of the *Divinity*, as being a *Creature* composed of *Spirit* as well as *Body*. So that upon the Whole, I think, it cannot be said, with any foundation, that *God suffers*, or *is unjust*, &c. when *Man suffers*, or *is unjust*, &c. and if so, this Objection is of no significance.

4thly, THAT *God* being necessarily existent, and no one single Part of
the

the Universe being so, all the Parts taken together cannot be so; and therefore, the Whole of what is, cannot be God.

I answer to this Objection, That if by saying, *no one single Part of the Universe is necessarily existent*, is meant, for Example, that *I, or any other Person, am not necessarily existent*; I readily agree with the Objection: but at the same time it must be allowed me, that, I have some preceeding Cause of my *Existence*; and that Cause, *another*; and so on to the beginning of the *Human Species*: and here we must stop for want of *Eclaircissement*. But let us take *an Atom of Matter*; (we shall not find the same Difficulties here) the Objection says, *This Atom of Matter not being necessarily existent, the whole Universe of Matter, which is nothing but the aggregate Heap of like Atoms, cannot be necessarily existent*. I agree, provided the *first Principle* be found to be
true,

true, viz. that an Atom of Matter is not necessarily existent; which, I am far from thinking. Let me explain myself. I would not be thought to mean that each Atom is existent of itself separatim; for then as many Atoms, as many Gods: but that each Atom being a Part of the Universe of Matter, is in its Proportion to the Whole necessarily existent, provided the whole be found to be so. The proof that Matter is not necessarily existent, must not therefore begin by considering whether each Atom is so, or no, which would be unfair, and lead us into monstrous Inconsistencies, but by considering, whether the Whole is. For Example: This Body of mine is composed of infinite Atoms: No one single Atom of this Body considered apart has in it Life, consequently the Whole, which is but the aggregate Heap of these Atoms, cannot, according to this extraordinary way of Reasoning, have Life in it; which is false in Fact. Now this way of Reasoning being just as applicable to this particular Instance,

as to the whole Universe, and the Absurdity as well as Falsity of it, being manifest, the Objection of course falls to the ground.

THESE are the only Objections of Consequence, that, I think, can be made to the above Notion of the *Divinity*.

I come now to the Question above-mentioned, *viz. Is the Soul eternal, or no?* in order to proceed in my Inquiry, concerning *God's Prescience*. I have already proved, that if it is, it must be a *Part of that general Intelligence*, which *existed from all Eternity*, the Soul not being *existent of itself separatum*. Now as the word *Part* seems to imply, that the *Soul* is a *Part* of the *Deity*, in like manner as my *Arm* is of my *Body*; I must beg leave to repeat here, what I have said before, *viz.* That as there is *no Nature* in the *Universe* different from *that* of *God*, or *distinct* from *him*, that is, *existing separatum, aut distinctim*; so the *Soul of Man*, or that *Parcel of Intelligence*,
which

which animates the Human Body, is of the same Nature as the Divinity, and not of a Nature distinct and separate from his; that is, does not exist separatim, aut distinctim of itself, and has no particular Nature of its own. This is what, I think, is to be understood by the Soul's being a Part of the Deity. But to return to the Question, Is the Soul eternal, or no?

IF the Soul, that is, *that parcel of Intelligence, that is in me*, is nothing but the *Effect of my Body*, as those who deny the *Eternity* of it, assert; even then it must be granted, that *that general Intelligence*, (that there is such a one, none can deny) *which runs through the whole of Matter*, must likewise be the *Effect of Matter*. If then abstract from Matter, there is nothing (as this Supposition implies) in Nature, Matter could not be created; Matter then is eternal, and of course that *Intelligence, that runs through the whole of Matter, is eternal likewise*. Thus then there

is an eternal Mind. Now as the *Parts of Matter* are in perpetual Motion, and vary eternally without destroying this *Intelligence that runs through it*, it will result from thence, that this *Intelligence* does not depend upon the *Variation of Matter*, nor on the *particular Adhesion, or Structure of its Parts*, but upon *Matter itself*; that is, that as long as there is *Matter*, what shape soever that *Matter* may have, there will be *Intelligence*. Now this perpetual Motion and variation of *Matter*, must be a regular Operation, or there would be no Order in the *Universe*, and things would run to *Confusion*; the contrary of which is evident to daily Observation. The Consequence then of all this, is, that the *Motions and Operations of Matter* are all guided by this *Spirit of Intelligence, diffused through it*. *Eternal Intelligence then is the ruling Principle*. Now the *Soul*, or that *Principle of Intelligence*, which is in me, is either of the same Nature with that general *Intelligence that runs through the*

the whole of Matter, (as has been above demonstrated,) or it is not. That it is not, none can say; since besides the above-mention'd Proof, it is certain, that the Faculty, by which I conceive Order, must be of the same Nature as that Faculty by which that Order was conceived, else I could not conceive it; as it is necessary that what the Eye sees, be of a visible Nature, what the Finger touches, of a tangible one, and so forth. And thus the Soul, or that intelligent Principle which I have in me, being of the same Nature with eternal Intelligence, is no more annihilable through the Changes of that Quantity of Matter it animates, than is that general one that animates the whole Mass of Matter; and not being annihilable, is of course immortal.

BUT if it be said here, that *Death*, tho' it be indeed only a *Variation of the Parts of Matter*, is nevertheless the *total Dissolution of a compleat orderly System*; and of course of that *Parcel of Intelligence that was in it*:

I answer, That, though it may be very difficult to give a satisfactory Account of this Point, *Life* and *Death* being both beyond the *reach* of *human* Capacity, yet nevertheless, as by the *Dissolution* of the *human Body*, no one *Atom* of *Matter* is *lost* ; in like manner, no one *Atom*, (if I may be allow'd the liberty of such an Expression,) of *Intelligence* can be *lost*. This *Parcel of Intelligence* cannot be owing to the meer *Construction* of the *Parts* of the *human Body* ; for then all Men, *compleat* in their *human Frame*, would have *Minds* *equally wise*, as *Clocks* *equally well-made*, both with respect to *Materials* and *Workmanship*, *go* *equally well*. But it is not so with Men, *weak* and *ill-shaped* Men having frequently *Minds* more *enlightned* than *healthier* and *better-made ones* ; and consequently, as the *Harmony of the Structure of the Parts* of the *human Creature* is not the immediate Cause of the *Life* of the *Soul*, so the *Dissolution of the Parts of the human Body* does not cause that of the *Soul*.

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BUT, if it be objected here, that the *Soul*, or that *Parcel of Intelligence that animates the Body*, is born with it, because we see the *Mind* of an *Infant* grow (as it were) as *visibly* as its *Body*; and that, as it begun with the *Body*, it must end with it; and the *Soul* thus is demonstrably *mortal*: I answer, that this Objection is so far from being a Demonstration of the *Soul's Mortality*, that it goes a great way towards proving it to be *eternal*. A brief Examination of it will shew the Truth of what I advance.

IF it be true, that the *Soul* is born with the *Body*, because that *Intelligence* which is in *me*, grows as perceptibly as the *Body*; and the *Faculties* of the *Mind* open and display themselves, as the *Body* grows riper by Years, and arrives at *Maturity*, and decay again, as the *Body* weakens and tends to *Dissolution*; and that, consequently, that *Intelligence*, (viz. the *Soul*,) depends upon, and is nothing
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without that Body ; then one of these three Propositions must be true : Either,

1st, THAT the Soul is nothing but the Modification of the Senses ; or,

2^{dly}, THE Result of the Disposition of the Parts of the human Body ; or else,

3^{dly}, THAT the human Seed is impregnate with Intelligence, that is, Mind, Soul.

AS to the first and second Propositions, If the Soul is the *Modification of the Senses*, or the *Result of the Disposition of the Parts of the human Body*, the Soul then will be nothing but the *mechanical Operation of Objects upon the Senses, according to the Structure of the Body ;* that is, nothing but a *Faculty of Conception, (Conception not intelligent but sensual,)* according to the Nature of our Frame. The Senses of the human

man Constitution are only the *Sight, Smell, Touch, Taste, Hearing*. This *Faculty* then of *Conception*, the *Soul* then, according to this *Supposition*, goes no farther than these *Particulars*; that is, *Man has no Powers beyond these*. How then shall we account for *Motion, Understanding*? *Motion* may indeed be allow'd to be a *Property of Life*. But *Understanding*, that *Faculty* by which *Man reasons, judges, reflects, decides, &c.* (none will deny that there is such a *Faculty* in *Man*;) Is this the *Effect of the Senses*? *Seeing, Smelling, Touching, Tasting, Hearing*? Can any, or all of these compounded together, produce *Understanding*? All that the *Sight* can do, is to take in an *Object*; the *Nose*, the *Smell, &c.* The *Understanding* is distinct from all this, and can therefore neither be the *Modification* of any one of, or all the *Senses*, nor the *Result of the Disposition of the material Parts of the human Body*. For Example: The *Eye* takes in a beautiful *Object*, and the *Senses* immediately

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covet the *Enjoyment of it*. *Reason* runs counter to that *Desire*, and prevents the gratifying of it, because upon Reflection, it may not be proper, all things consider'd. This *Action* then of the *Mind* is different from *that* of the *Senses*, and cannot therefore be, as I said before, the *Modification of them*. In like manner, the *Disposition* of the *Parts* of my *Body* makes such a *Gratification* extremely suitable to its corporal Nature. But *Reason* again runs counter to this *Gratification* so suitable to the *Disposition of the Parts of my Body*, and prevents it. This *Action* is quite different from any thing operated by the *machinal Part of my Frame*, and consequently, is owing to some *Power or Faculty in me*, which is neither the *Modification of the Senses*, nor the *Result of the Parts of my Body*; and this *Power or Faculty* is what we call *Soul, Mind, Intelligence*. If then this *Soul, Mind or Intelligence*, which we have, is neither the *Modification of the Senses*, nor the *Result of the Parts of the hu-*

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man Frame, it must be *distinct* from the *Body*.

THE Question then at present to be consider'd is, Whether the *third Supposition*, (viz. Whether the *human Seed is impregnate with Mind, Soul, Intelligence*) is *true*; and how far, if true? It may be a *Demonstration* or *Confutation* of the *Eternity of the Soul*. But, as this is a Point, I am not *Physician* enough to pursue thro' all its *Branches*; so it will be sufficient for my Purpose, if I can shew, supposing it to be true, that it is no wise *contradictory* to the Notion of the *Eternity of the Soul*. I use the Expression *Eternity of the Soul* throughout, because it can never be philosophically demonstrated, that a *created Being* can ever become *immortal*, such a thing being *contrary* to *Truth* and *Nature*; and therefore, unless the *Soul* can be proved to be from all *Eternity*, it can never, I think, be proved to be *immortal*. This Notion of the *Soul's Eternity* may be *contrary*

to the *Opinion* of several *learned Men*, who, perhaps, may think, that *God* can render it, tho' a *created Being*, *immortal*. However, I can by no means think it a wrong Notion; for a *Progression out of Finitude into Infinity*, which would be the Case here, is a Contradiction in Terms. But to return;

I have already proved, that the *Soul* cannot be the *Result* of the *human Composition*, nor the *Modification of the Senses*; and of course, *not arising from*, nor *dependant on the Body*. The only thing left for those, who assert the contrary, is to suppose *the human Seed to be impregnate with Mind, Soul, Intelligence*; whence they conclude, (falsely, as I shall shew,) that, as it is *born* with the *Body*, so it *dies* with it.

THIS Supposition appears, at first sight, to be a Contradiction in Terms, as it supposes *one Nature* to be *impregnate* with *another Nature contrary to itself*; that

that is, as it supposes *Matter* (for *human Seed* is undeniably *material*) to be *impregnate* with *Spirit* or *Intelligence*, an *Essence contrary* to its *own*. But this is no more contradictory, than that the *Soul* should be *united* to the *Body* at all; the Time when it becomes *united* making no *Difference*, as to the Contradiction imply'd in the *junction* of the two *Natures*. It may therefore, without any Absurdity, as to the *possible Union* of the two *Natures*, be said, that *human Seed* is *impregnate* with *Mind*, *Soul*, *Intelligence*; let us then suppose *human Seed* to be *impregnate* with *Mind*, *Soul*, *Intelligence*, does it result from thence, that, because *human Seed* is *so impregnate*, that therefore, *Mind*, *Soul*, *Intelligence*, *arises from*, *is made of*, and *exists* in that *Seed*? The same thing might better be asserted of the *Souls* of grown-up Persons: whereas, the contrary has been evidently prov'd; it having been demonstrated above, that the *Soul* is *neither the Result of the human Composition,*

tion, nor the Modification of the Senses; and of course, neither arising from, nor dependant on the Body. Now, the human Seed can have no other Powers than those we see in Man; (Man being nothing but Seed grown to Perfection,) and if the Soul cannot be the Result of any Powers in Man, much less can it be that of any Powers in the Seed of Man. One proves the other. Supposing therefore, the human Seed to be impregnate with Mind, Soul, Intelligence, it can never result from thence, that the Soul arises from, is dependant on, and exists in it: And if the Soul arises not from, is not dependant on, and exists not in the human Seed, which is the earliest Beginning of Man; nay, which may in some sort be called a pre-existing State of Man; That of which the Soul consists, That Principle of Intelligence which is in me, must have been prior even to that; and consequently, it being of the same nature with that eternal Principle of Intelligence

*gence diffused thro' the whole of things,
it must be eternal.*

I come now to answer that Part of the Objection to the Reason I alledged against *God's Prescience*, as defined in the Beginning of these Sheets, which says, that *that Part of Man, which some call Mind, Soul, Intelligence, being eternal by its nature, the Actions of Men are foreknowable in their nature by God from all Eternity.*

THAT *God foreknew* from all Eternity, that Man, a Creature endow'd with such and such *Faculties* of Mind and Body, should *act* according as these different *Faculties* should more or less *move* him to *act*, I readily agree. Such *Foreknowledge* is quite *suitable* with *divine Wisdom*, quite *consonant* with the rest of *God's Attributes*, and *foreknowable in the nature of the thing from all Eternity.* But this is saying no more, than that *God foreknew from all Eternity that Man should*

should act like Man; and not that this Man should do this particular thing, and that Man that. In like manner God foreknew from all Eternity, that every Creature should act according to its nature; and every Plant, Tree, Flower, &c. should bring forth according to its Kind; and not that such a particular Creature should do such a particular thing; and such a Tree should bring forth such a particular Quantity of Fruit or Leaves. And therefore, to sum up the whole, tho' the Soul is eternal, it does not follow from thence, that the Actions of Men are foreknowable in their own natures from all Eternity; because the Soul not being eternally united with the Body, the Actions of the Body cannot be foreknowable in that manner. It is, as has been above laid down, no Part of God's Character to foreknow them.

I promised, in the Beginning of these Sheets, to consider *Prescience* as a Part of God's Character, which must be consistent

sistent with the whole of it, and not destructive of human Liberty. But, having demonstrated, in the course of these Reflections, that God may be infinitely perfect without such Prescience as is there combatted, it will follow of course, that such Prescience is inconsistent with his moral Character, and ought, consequently, to be rejected. It remains, therefore, with me to consider, what Prescience we may suppose the Deity to have? And this will come within a very short Compass.

THE *Prescience* which the *Deity* may be suppos'd to have with respect to the *moral and natural World*, is, as I have said above in other Words, nothing more than *that that infinite Wisdom, which contriv'd things with such and such Natures, Properties and Relations, fore-knows of course from all Eternity, that Creatures, and things so endued, will act according to such Natures, Properties and Relations, without descending*

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for that to Particulars; that is, without foreknowing particularly what A. B. or any other Person may do. He may be suppos'd virtually to foreknow even that; that is, he may be suppos'd to foreknow that A. B. having more of the amorous, revengeful, or ambitious Passion in his Temper, will listen more to the Impulses of that Passion, than another, who has less in his. But this is only foreknowing that a passionate Man shall act like a passionate Man; and a cool Man like a cool Man. That virtual Foreknowledge that is here suppos'd in the Deity, does not at all influence my Action, or destroy my Liberty, neither can it be properly called particular Foreknowledge with respect to me, or any one else; but comes within that general Foreknowledge defined in the preceding Lines. And this Foreknowledge is a Part of God's Character, which is consistent with the whole of it, and not destructive of human Liberty.

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POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING mention'd in the foregoing Part of these Reflections, that *the Nature of Man's coming into the World, and the Continuation of the human Species seem, plainly and necessarily, to imply a Beginning*; which likewise *virtually* implying, as if, (*Part of the Universe being in a state of Chaos or Confusion before the Era of Creation,*) the *Deity itself* (if He be *Life, Intelligence and Matter, eternally united,*) was *before that time Part-Order, Part-Confusion*, which would be absurd: It may be necessary to add a few Words, in order to obviate this Objection.

WHETHER the Race of *Man*, and of course, of all *Animals and Vegetables*, is *eternal* or *no*; that is, Whether the *World was from all Eternity what it now is*, I shall not take upon me to decide, it being foreign to the Subject of

these Reflections. I shall therefore reduce this Point to a very small Compass, and content myself with shewing, that in *either Case* my Notion of the *Divinity* can no ways be *affected* by it.

IT is pretended by some great Men, that a *Creation* is demonstrable, in that a *Succession* without a *Beginning*, (which would be the Case, if *Man*, &c. was not *created*,) is a Contradiction in Terms.

OTHERS in opposition to these assert, that a *Creation* is not demonstrable, because that necessarily supposes a *Chaos* preceding the present orderly *Disposition* of things, which would be inconsistent with the *Existence* of *eternal Intelligence*, which as necessarily excludes all Possibility of *Chaos* or *Confusion*.

AS it is impossible, on one hand, to know what preceded *Creation*, and that *eternal Intelligence* necessarily excludes all Possibility of *Chaos* or *Confusion*; and

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as on the other, it is no less true that a *Succession* implies a *Beginning*; it is consequently impossible to come at any *Certainty* in this Point, since the Knowledge *previous* to it cannot be *attain'd*.

HERE then this *Matter* must *rest*, till one of these two *Systems* is reduced to *Error*; that is, till he that denies a *Creation*, can prove that a *Succession* does not imply a *Beginning*; or, till he that asserts a *Creation*, can prove that a *preceding State of Chaos or Confusion* is consistent with the Existence of *eternal Wisdom*.

AS to the present Objection, *viz.* that before the *Creation* the *Deity* was *Part-Order, Part-Confusion*; it is certain, that, as the *Trnth* on which it is founded cannot be *proved*, it has no Right to be *formally admitted and confuted*: And, as a State of *Chaos or Confusion* in any Part of the *Universe* would be equally *inconsistent* with the *divine Nature*, sup-
posing

posing the Deity even to be *pure Spirit*; (as is pretended by the Opposers of this System,) an *Objection* that implies a *Supposition*, which *destroys* in fact the *Existence* of a *God*, in any sort whatsoever, ought rather to be looked upon as *arising* from the *Finity* of our *Understandings*, than from any *Foundation* there is for it in *Truth* or *Nature*.

F I N I S.



